

SEPSIS

What is Sepsis?

Sepsis is a severe illness caused by overwhelming infections of the blood stream to toxin (poison) producing bacteria. Sepsis accounts for 2 out of every 100 hospital admissions. It is life threatening and if it continues unchecked, will result in death. The death rate can be as high as 60% for people with underlying medical problems. It is less, but still significant, for individuals without other medical issues.

It occurs in 2% of all hospitalizations and accounts for as much as 25% of intensive care unit (ICU) bed utilization. It is a major cause of death in intensive care units worldwide. In the United States, sepsis is the leading cause of death in non-coronary ICU patients, and the tenth most common cause of death overall according to 2000 data from the Centers for Disease Control. It is estimated that three quarter of a million people develop severe sepsis each year, and over 200,000 of them die. That is more deaths than claimed by breast, colorectal, pancreatic and prostate cancer combined.

Many individuals that we serve cannot describe and report their symptoms of illness to you, or they may have an inability to be aware of them. **Waiting for obvious symptoms to develop can often be too late to stop the progression of the infection.**

What causes sepsis?

An untreated bacterial infection or one that is not responding to treatment can cause sepsis. Common places where those infections may occur are:

- Kidneys
- Liver or gall bladder
- Bowel
- Skin
- Bladder
- Lungs

What are the symptoms of sepsis?

Early signs:

- Reduced mental alertness of feeling very tired
- Hyperventilation (greater than 30 breaths per minute)
- Fever (as little as 2 degrees higher than normal)

Advanced signs:

- Very high fever (greater than 102) or low temperature (hypothermia)
- Chills
- Shaking
- Warm skin
- Rapid heart rate (greater than 90 beats per minute)
- Decreased urine output
- Skin rash
- Confusion or delirium
- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Low blood pressure
- Low or high white blood cell count
- Organ or system failure

